

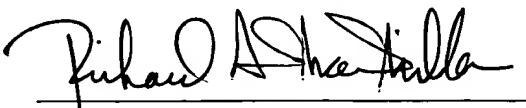
REMARKS

The Examiner rejected independent Claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combined teachings of the Pike et al. and Sones et al. references. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 11 defines the invention as a method for analyzing irregularities formed in a surface of a rotatable article to determine the presence of a preferential lead. As set forth in the specification, "the size and orientation of the irregularities formed in the outer circumferential surface of the shaft are so small as to be not visible to the naked eye or otherwise readily ascertainable." Initially, a plurality of representations of different, relatively small areas of the irregularities formed in the surface of the article is obtained. Then, the plurality of representations is processed to generate a single representation of a relatively large area of the irregularities formed in the surface of the article. Lastly, the single representation of the relatively large area of the irregularities formed in the surface of the article to determine the presence of a preferential lead is analyzed.

The Sones et al. reference does not show or suggest such a method. Rather, the Sones et al. reference relates to a method of inspecting the surface of an article for a variety of defects, including thread defects in a threaded container. Thus, the Sones et al. reference is limited to an examination of an article that is known to have a threaded surface, and the purpose of the Sones et al. reference method is to examine the quality of that threaded surface. The claimed invention, on the other hand, specifically relates to the examination of an article to determine whether a preferential lead is present. Thus, the method disclosed in the Sones et al. reference is not in any way applicable to the claimed invention. Claims 11 through 20 are, therefore, clearly patentable.

Respectfully submitted,



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